

MLB World Series: Dodgers vs Blue Jays

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Rogers Centre

Toronto Blue Jays

Kevin Gausman

Pregame 1 Press Conference

Q. How does it feel finally getting to pitch in a World Series game?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, it's exciting. I've played over 12 years now. Every year you go into the season with the hope that you're one of the last two teams playing. That just hasn't been the reality for me. I'm just really excited for this group and for myself. It's been a crazy ride and now we are here and we're excited to kind of show the world what the Blue Jays are all about.

Q. A few years ago, I remember you were in this same room, and you were talking about -- at the end of the 2022 season, you said, We have to learn how to win, and you guys are in the World Series. Just take me back through that journey over the past few years and what it's been like to stay in Toronto.

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, really this is the reason why I came here. Looking at the roster years ago after the 2021 season -- I believe they had the best offense in baseball in 2021, and that definitely excited me being a pitcher.

But really kind of looking at the names on the roster, knowing that all those guys, I felt like, were going to be here for a while and really kind of had the foundation of being really good and also having George being kind of the veteran leader, and also just looking at, yeah, the pitchers that they already had, Berrios and Manoah.

And so, I mean, there was a lot to like and that's ultimately why I came here. The first couple years were rough and heartbreaking. To get swept back-to-back years in the postseason in the Wild Card was tough. Last year was even tougher because it felt like we were a really good team but just didn't play very well, and we all just kind of got punched in the face. I felt like the organization did a really great job of looking internally while also kind of



figuring out moves they needed to make. Hat's off to them for doing everything that they have to get us to this point, and it's taken a lot of different people.

Q. Having thrown the splitter for as long as you have, what have you observed about that pitch becoming a lot more popular across the league and what has it been like having a couple guys join your team this year that have relied on it heavily in Hoffman and Yesavage?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, it's fun. I think back even to 2021 when I signed with the Giants, and they kind of told me, We want you to be a two-pitch guy with your secondary pitch at the time being a pitch that 90 percent of the league didn't even throw. I kind of thought they were crazy, to be honest. Didn't know kind of why they thought it would work.

But then I was having a great spring and then COVID happened and it really was kind of the perfect scenario. It was like, I'm only going to make 10 starts. I feel pretty confident that I'll still be able to get a job even if this goes south. I was three starts in, and I was like, I'm never going to pitch any different than this. I had faced a lot of guys that I faced really early in my career, but I was a completely different pitcher now.

So it was really kind of fun for me to see that pitch just grow and get better and better the more I threw it. And now it's a pitch that, man, a lot of guys throw and it's a good pitch when it's on. I think it's the best in baseball when it's on. So it's been really fun to see and we're going to see a lot of them series, for sure.

Q. You've kind of talked about it, you've been on really good teams that didn't get here, for whatever reason. Now that you're here, have you come to any conclusions about what it takes to have a good team that can also win when it needs to like this?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: I mean, this is only my first World Series, so I really can't -- I feel like I can't say that much about it. The two best teams that I've been on were the 2021 Giants and this season. When I think back to those two teams, a lot of things had to click, especially the

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Giants. Like, 2021, I think everybody picked to us finish last in the NL West, and we won 108 games.

So it just seemed like every kind of move that Kapler made that year worked. There was a lot of times where he would make a move in the dugout and everybody kind of wouldn't agree with it, but it somehow worked. So it just kind of got to a point where everybody believed. And that's kind of the same feeling here, is the belief in each other that no matter what the score is, no matter who we're playing, we feel like we have a chance.

Q. Is there a measure of revenge here for you? You talked about that 2021 Giants team. The Dodgers knocked you out in the first round. Is it nice for you to have another shot at them?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, for sure. But I would feel the same way if we were playing anybody. I want to win. It doesn't matter who is over there. I still think about the check swing on Wilmer Flores. I don't think it was a swing, but, you know, that's kind of water under the bridge. And Max was pitching in that game, so it's kind of full circle.

Now I've got to know Max on a personal level, on a professional level, and I mean, what an unbelievable career he has had. If you've spent any time around him, like he has a baseball mind. He doesn't stop. It's non-stop. There's definitely times I have to kind of distance myself from him at times because he's just go, go, go all the time. But, no, I think I would have the same feeling if I was playing anybody.

Q. It sounds like that Wilmer is water under the bridge already. But for Bo, having him back, what does this mean after -- he's been out for seven weeks, he's missed this whole run. What's it mean to you to have him back?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, it's really cool. I think there was a group of us that when we made the postseason kind of went to Bo and said, We're doing everything we can to see you play again this year. So we're just really happy that he's able to be out there, and hat's off to him. He's done so much. He's been here every single day so early, multiple treatments throughout one day, and really testing it. Had some bad days, had some great days. So you really got to give all the credit in the world to him and the training staff for even making this a possibility.

I'm really excited for Bo. Obviously, he's been a huge part of this organization for a long time. So if he wasn't out there, I would be heartbroken for him. So it's really -- I'm really happy for him and really excited to see him go out

and do what he's done. When he's healthy, when he's in the batter's box, he's one of the hardest guys in baseball to get out. I'm just excited to watch him go do his thing.

Q. When you signed with the Jays back in 2021, what kind of idea you have to Jays in Toronto and Canada and how you think this what this series means to Canada?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, really signing here, I didn't necessarily understand one team for an entire country. Now I've been here for four years, I really understand how much they love us, how much they support us, how much they want us to succeed. If you play well in Toronto, as you've seen, all those guys from the 2015, 2016 teams coming back, throwing out the first pitch, like, those guys are legends.

So I think this city really loves their athletes and especially if you give them something to be proud of. So we're ecstatic. The love that they give us, we feel it out there, and they have turned this place into such a crazy environment, such a fun place to come to work every day. And really, you drive around this city right now, it's electric. Everybody's talking about the Blue Jays and they're fired up for us, and we're excited to go out and put on a good show for 'em.

Q. How many pitches into a start do you feel that a pitch is really working that night?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: If I knew that answer, I would feel like it would be a lot easier to navigate. As a pitcher, you work -- especially as a starter, we have the luxury where we get a lot of time before the game to kind of figure out what we have on that day. For me, I only have three pitches, so they all got to be on, honestly. I don't have the luxury of having a lot of different pitches that, hey, this pitch isn't it for today. I got to throw this pitch.

But I guess it's kind of a feel thing. You feel out the game. I definitely have games where early in the game I know, like, I'm going to throw a lot of splits tonight. Like, the split is just coming out really well. For me, I get a blister on my middle finger, so usually the bigger the blister early on in the game usually the better the split's going to be.

Q. Do you remember interacting with Trey at all in the spring training? I know he wasn't in big league camp, but did you share any moments with him in spring and what was your reaction when you kind of were following his journey and found out he was going to be helping the big league team?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Well, I didn't meet him until he showed



up in Tampa. I know we were in the same building. But yeah, I never saw him throw. I had seen videos of him throwing. What a unique delivery. That's the first thing you kind of notice right off the bat is he looks a little different than most guys. But, yeah, I mean, really kind of the first time I watched him throw was his bullpen in Tampa, getting ready for his first Major League start. Like I said, it was kind of the same thing, you're watching and it's just like, man, that's a little different. Then if you know anything about metrics, and looking at an iPad, you know that his stuff is a lot different than most guys. His fastball is elite. His slider is this huge difference maker, it's really hard. I think the biggest thing with his slider is his bad sliders are a really good split. So I think people don't realize that. I think it's almost like he's throwing two different splits, one's at 88 to 90, and one is kind of 83 to 86, and so it's kind of pick your poison. Then he's got a really good elite fastball. I mean, he's throwing 22-inch vert with two, three horizontal. Like from straight over the top. So I think it's just a different look, and I'm really excited to watch him do his thing tonight.

Q. Was it a no-brainer for you and for the club to back you off and give you the extra rest and have Trey go Game 1? What was that process like?

KEVIN GAUSMAN: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't say it was a slam dunk, but I'm better the more days you give me, so I think that had something to do with it. But I think also it's about kind of keeping him locked in, not trying to mess with his routine too much. This does kind of line him up for this day. But, yeah, I think maybe if I would have -- I think if I would have thrown maybe less pitches, and maybe not such a high leverage position Game 7, then maybe it would have been a different conversation. But I knew kind of that maybe pitching Game 7 was not, I wasn't going to be ready for Game 1. But in my mind I was completely fine with that, because you have to get here first. We have a lot of great pitchers, so I feel pretty confident with any of the four or five guys to start Game 1.

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